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Orinda Historical Society Newsletter

October 2006

P. O. BOX 82, ORINDA, CA 94563

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Schools an Important Part of Orinda History

By Teresa Long

When asked why they moved to Orinda, most people respond: "the schools." Good public schools are a long-standing part of Orinda's history. In recognition of Miramonte High School's 50-year anniversary (see story on Page 4), the Orinda Historical Society is honoring Orinda's schools with a window display at the OHS Museum. The display chronicles Orinda schools from their beginnings to the present day. Did you know that there have been schools in Orinda for more than 140 years?

In the mid-1800s, schools appeared in the East Bay as the area became more populated. However, attendance was a great obstacle in creating a school system. The 1858 census reported 1291 children in Contra Costa County of which only 358 attended public schools. Many children did not attend school or only did so sporadically because of farm work and other responsibilities.

The first school in Orinda, called the Moraga School because it was located on the property of Joe Moraga, was built in 1861. This school was located near the intersection of Moraga Way and Glorietta Blvd. In 1864, Moraga School had 20 students. At that time, Moraga School paid a teacher \$40 for two months instruction. This school existed for sixty years.



Moraga School Built 1861



Orinda Park School 1921

In 1882, a second Orinda school, Orinda Park School, was built on the Wagner property. The Orinda Park School was located on the hill near the current Wagner Ranch School campus. During the winter the roads would get so muddy that the school had to be closed. The Orinda Park School burned down in 1884, but was rebuilt and used until 1924. In 1904 the Orinda Park school had 16 students, while the Moraga School had 20, the same enrollment as 40 years earlier.

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Reminiscing on Orinda's Bygone, Simpler Days

By OHS President Lucy Hupp Williams

This article was first published in the Contra Costa Sun in 2002

The 40's and 50's were magic times for kids and horses in Orinda. The hillsides were wide open and undeveloped. Homes had enough room in back yards for corrals, barns and pasture.

Roads had wide dirt shoulders. Highway 24 was four lanes with dirt shoulders. Orchards were unfenced and open for occasional races. Riders could easily move between towns. Trails abounded through the hills with new ones created as spaces were explored.

Creeks had enough water in places to provide a cooling dip. In Tilden Park, Lake Anza had a

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Museum Location

Lower Level of
Orinda Library
24 Orinda Way

Museum Hours of Operation

Monday, Wednesday, &
Friday 3-5 p.m.
Also by Appointment
24 Hour Answering Machine
925-254-1353
www.orindahistory.org

Upcoming Events

- **Holiday Bazaar**
November 4th & 5th (Saturday 10 to 5, Sunday 11 to 5) at the Orinda Community Center. OHS members will be selling afghans, totes & coasters.
- **November Board Meeting**
Wednesday, November 15, 3 to 5 pm at OHS Museum

The OHS Annual Holiday Party will be
Wednesday,
December 6th
from 6 to 9 pm.

RSVP by
December 1st

Miramonte High School Celebrates 50 Years



A Miramonte vintage Cheerleader outfit and photos were among the many artifacts on display

Miramonte High School in Orinda celebrated 50 years with an open house for former faculty and students on September 15, 2006 at its campus. This event was attended by over 500 people and was lots of fun for all. Many Miramonte artifacts such as photographs, trophies, banners, and band uniforms were on display. There was also a Miramonte trivia contest.

An outstanding video depicting 50 years of Miramonte memories was shown twice in the theater, the last showing to a standing-room-only crowd. Produced last spring by teacher **Cheryl Davis'** Advanced Communications class at Miramonte, the video was the class project for the 2006 spring quarter. MHS Juniors **Tyler Pavy** and **Scott Demunck** were the film's directors. The video divided the last 50 years into decades and showed the character and spirit of the school for each period. The students used yearbooks, scrapbooks, and interviews with former principals, teachers and students to come up with a very informa-

tive and interesting piece. Obviously a lot of work went into this project. If you missed this wonderful video, do not fear — it will be shown again at the Orinda Historical Society holiday dinner in December!

This celebration was organized by the 50th anniversary committee chaired by **Alison Everett Burke** (MHS '70) For more information about the Miramonte 50th celebration and the school's history, check out the terrific web site created by committee member **Vanessa Crews**: www.miramontealumni.com

Funds raised as part of Miramonte's 50th anniversary are being used to purchase display cases to permanently house Miramonte artifacts and memorabilia at the school.



OHS Vice President Erik Andersen being interviewed by Miramonte Student at the 50th Celebration



Past Miramonte Principal (1995 to 2005) Dennis Regalado (right) and current Principal Raúl Zamora (left) enjoying the festivities



Miramonte 1977 graduates: Roxanne Eldred, Mary (Van de Griendt) Christian, Alisa Fennell & Sally (Featherstone) Eccles having fun at the 50th party.

Mark your Calendars for Sunday November 12th from 11am to 3:30 pm. Miramonte High School is hosting it's 33rd annual holiday boutique. This longstanding Orinda tradition is a great place to shop for unique gift items.



Looking for Holiday gift ideas? Give something historic—OHS has beautiful afghans, totes and historic photo coasters for sale. Call OHS Museum at 254-1353

